

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following list of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the above-captioned application:

Claims 1 - 17. (Cancelled.)

Claim 18: (New) An iris diaphragm comprising an annular base and an annular rotatable element, a plurality of leaves having opposite first and second end portions, first means for freely pivotally connecting each leaf first end portion to one of said annular base and annular rotatable element, second means for pivotally slidably connecting each leaf second end portion to the other of said annular base and annular rotatable element, each first means including an opening in one of said annular base and annular rotatable element through which passes a tubular connecting portion punched from the material of the associated leaf, a terminal end of each tubular connecting portion being folded back against the one of said annular base and annular rotatable element to effect a secure free pivotal connection therebetween, and said second means including a slide pin carried by each leaf second end portion which is slidably and pivotally engaged with a slide provided on the other of said annular base and annular rotatable element.

Claim 19. (New) The iris diaphragm as defined in claim 18 wherein said first freely pivotally connecting means freely pivotally connects each leaf first end portion to said annular base, and said slides are provided on the annular rotatable element.

Claim 20. (New) The iris diaphragm as defined in claim 18 wherein said first freely pivotally connecting means freely pivotally connects each leaf first end portion to said annular rotatable element, and said slides are provided on said annular base.

Claim 21. (New) The iris diaphragm as defined in claim 18 wherein said second connecting means is a slide pin carried by each leaf second end in sliding engagement with an associated one of said slides.

Claim 22. (New) The iris diaphragm as defined in claim 18 wherein said second connecting means is a slide pin carried by each leaf second end in sliding engagement with an associated one of said slides, and each slide pin is of a cylindrical configuration.

Claim 23. (New) The iris diaphragm as defined in claim 18 wherein said first and second connecting means connect said leaves at equal points around a circumference of said variable iris aperture defined thereby, and inner edges of said leaves are curved in correspondence to the curvature of said variable iris aperture.